

# INFORMATION ABOUT:



## Obtaining Land from the Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

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### What is the Bureau of Land Management?

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages 264 million acres of public lands found primarily in the Western United States, and 564 million acres of subsurface mineral estate located throughout the country. Originally, the public lands were valued principally for the commodities extracted from them, including minerals and livestock forage; today, the public also prizes them for their recreation opportunities and the natural, historical, and cultural resources they contain. Additionally, at a time of unprecedented growth in the Western States, the public lands are one of the last guarantees of open space, a key factor in the West's lifestyle.

### Am I entitled to free land from the BLM?

No. While that was true at one time, there is no free land. Congress abolished homesteading in 1976 with passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which made it national policy to retain the public lands in Federal ownership. Today, the BLM manages the public lands for all Americans, who enjoy numerous benefits from these lands, including recreational opportunities, such as camping, hiking, hunting, and fishing.

### I have seen an advertisement that says I can obtain low-cost land from the BLM. Is this true?

No. The BLM occasionally sells land – but only at appraised, fair market value, as required by law. The advertisement by private companies not associated with the Federal government may ask you to send in money for information about how to buy land for \$1.25 an acre (or a similarly low figure). The BLM recommends that you read carefully any advertisement on this subject and be cautious about sending money. The BLM will provide you free and accurate information about land sales.

### How does the BLM select land that might be sold?

Through its land-use planning process, the BLM identifies parcels of land for potential sale that fall into one of the following categories:

- scattered and isolated tracts that are difficult or uneconomical to manage;
- tracts acquired by the BLM for a specific purpose that are no longer needed for that purpose; or
- land where disposal will serve important public objectives, such as community expansion and economic development.

However, the growing cities and towns of the West are spreading closer or even next to once-remote BLM-managed public lands. As a result, the public in general – and Westerners in particular – appreciate the open space guaranteed by BLM, which means that the agency considers its land sales even more carefully than in the past.

**May I select a specific parcel of BLM-managed public land that I am interested in purchasing?**

No, however, you may write to a local office and ask if a particular parcel could be sold. You may bid only for those parcels that the BLM has decided to sell on a competitive-bid basis. The type of sale (competitive, modified competitive, or direct) is determined by a number of criteria including access and adjacent land ownership patterns. All sales must be in conformance with the land use plan.

**Are there any lands for sale in the East?**

No. Sales of BLM managed lands take place only in the Western States: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.

**What do the lands look like?**

Land types vary widely. Some may be high plains desert; some are rural. In Wyoming, public lands have little or no agricultural potential. Most tracts have limited or no access as they are totally surrounded by private land, and have no water.

**Where should I look if I want to buy land in Wyoming?**

If you would like to purchase land in Wyoming, you would probably be more successful in buying private land through the local real estate market. It is recommended that you contact a real estate agent in the area where you may be interested in acquiring land. Local realtors provide a much better opportunity for meeting your specific needs.

**Does the BLM sell buildings?**

No. The General Services Administration administers the sale of all surplus Federal property.

**I heard that I could get land if I have a mining claim. Is that true?**

No. Although current law allows you to stake a mining claim on Federal lands that are open to mineral entry, beginning in 1994 and in each subsequent year, Congress declared a moratorium on applying for a mineral patent to a properly located and recorded mining claim. While this moratorium is in effect, the BLM cannot accept mineral patent applications. You may obtain further information on locating mining claims from any BLM State Office.

**How can I get a copy of a land or mineral patent?**

You may obtain microfilm copies of land and mineral patents from any BLM State Office Information Center at a cost of \$1.10 per page. In addition, some land patent records are available for selected states on the BLM's Web site (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>).

**How can I get additional information?**

Call the BLM Wyoming State Office at 307-775-6256 or visit our website at [www.wy.blm.gov](http://www.wy.blm.gov).